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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the educational system of Malta which is regulated by the 1964 constitution, a 1974 Education Act, and a Malta Development Plan for the period 1973-80. These documents state that education in Malta will be free to all students, compulsory from ages six to 16, administered by a Minister of Education and a Commission for the Development of Higher Education, and should include non-compulsory religious instruction in Maltese and English up to the secondary level. The period 1974-76 was one of significant educational change in Malta due to the passing of the 1974 Education Act. Major developments include the introduction of kindergarten classes for four-year-olds, addition of Arabic as a compulsory subject in the secondary curriculum, and provision of summer activities and employment for students. The number of trade schools was increased from ten to 15 during the period and the annual timetables of primary, secondary, and technical schools were synchronized. Findings from studies by the University of Malta and the Malta Union of Teachers indicate that research on attainment levels and learning attitudes is needed as part of a general government documentation service. (Author/DB)

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NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE 36TH UNESCO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION, 1977 (BIE CONFINTED 36/RN/76)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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PART I - The Organisation and Structure of Education in Malta

General Principles

Education in Malta is regulated by (a) the 1964 Constitution of Malta Act as amended in 1973 (b) the 1974 Education [redacted] and (c) the Malta Development Plan (1973-[redacted]) Act passed in 1976. The Constitution mentions the official languages of the island and hence of the schools, the religion of the state and the provision of basic educational facilities. The 1974 Education Act lays down the duties and functions of the Minister of Education and constituted educational councils/commissions; it also deals with the Private Schools, statutory education, compulsory attendance, the constitution of the University and child employment. The 1973-80 Development Plan, which is the first human resources plan for the island, outlines the main trends education in Malta is to follow within the period of the plan and lays down Government's underlying policy, namely:

"a. to provide equality and improvement of educational opportunity;

"b. to promote a greater awareness of the dignity, status and potential contribution to society, of manual labour;

"c. to move towards a system based on Malta's needs and culture - always bearing in mind the importance of harmonising this system with that of Western Europe; and

"d to develop independence of thought and a sense of responsibility among individuals."

Education is compulsory from the ages of 6 to 16 and free for Maltese nationals and bona-fide residents in all government schools including free tuition in the University. The Private system of education includes nursery, primary and secondary schools. The private system also comprises commercial schools, language tuition classes and courses for adults. Government subsidises private secondary schools on a per capita basis. There is equality of access at all levels in the government school system and the University. This is largely based on educational

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attainment Although religion is offered in all state schools up to the secondary level, parents who so wish may withdraw their children from religion classes while a proficiency certificate in Religion is no longer a necessary qualification for entry into University and other higher education courses

System of Administration

The 1974 Education Act lays down that "no person other than the Minister of Education shall establish or keep a school unless such a school is licensed by the Minister." Moreover, the Minister is bound not to issue a licence unless he is satisfied that the accommodation, facilities, equipment and amenities of the proposed school as well as its staff and general curriculum are of a standard comparable to those of Government schools and may at any time revoke any licence issued, or deemed to be issued, if he ceases to be so satisfied. The University of Malta is an autonomous institution almost wholly supported by Government funds.

An Advisory Council of Education consisting of officers of the Ministry of Education and of other persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, represent the views of parents teachers trade unions, industrialists and the Catholic Church advises the Minister of Education upon such matters connected with education as they may deem appropriate (except on the University) and upon any question referred to them by the Minister There is also a Commission for the Development of Higher Education composed of ex officio members and others appointed by the Prime Minister (some of them recommended by the University) and which is charged among other things, with advising the Government on any matter relating to or connected with the University which the Government may refer to them, identifying the needs of Malta as they become relevant to the development of higher education co-ordinating the activities in the different sectors of higher education, maintaining a continuous dialogue between the Government and the University with a view to implementing the needs perceived by the Government and advising the Government on the budgetary allocation to be made for tertiary education. The Commission works through a Standing Committee.

The Education Department is entrusted with the implementation of Government policy in education outside the University. It runs the government system of schools and sees to the needs of compulsory education and compulsory attendance. It is under a Director of Education assisted on the educational side by three (3)

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Assistant Directors (one for primary education, one for secondary education and one for technical education) and on the administrative side by two (2) Assistant Heads (one for Accounts and the other for Personnel). A number of Education Officers look after curriculum development and standards in schools others are in charge of such specialised services as Educational Guidance and Counselling, Test Construction Youth Services Special Education Remedial Education, Evening Courses and Planning. External examinations, Educational Welfare and the School Psychological Services are three other offices within the Education Department.

The Education Department runs courses of instruction for apprentices and other Government Departments chief among which may be counted trade training courses for members of para-military labour corps, and language courses for Civil Servants and the Police. At the same time, several government and para-statal bodies provide services to the Education Department; these include school building and maintenance by the Public Works Department, school medical services by the Medical and Health Department, school broadcasting by the para-statal institution responsible for Broadcasting.

Government expenditure on education comes from central funds and is budgeted for annually in the Ministry of Education Vote. The Education Vote includes the Government grant to the University, to private schools, to sports, etc but does not include services to the Education Department carried out by other Ministries (e.g. school medical services, school maintenance, school broadcasting). There are no local rates or taxes for education Private schools charge fees regulated by Government if the schools want to partake of Government grants The Government expenditure on education amounts to about 9.5% of the national budget

Structure and Organisation

Most children start school at the age of 4. They attend government kindergarten classes (first opened in October 1975) or private nursery/infants schools. The primary school course proper starts at the age of 5 years and lasts 6 years. The curriculum consists of Maltese, English, Mathematics, Religion, Physical Education, History, Georgraphy, Civics, Science, Music and Art with emphasis on activity methods and centres of interest. Promotion is by age and a cumulative assessment record is kept.

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On the successful completion of the primary school course children transfer automatically to area secondary schools. Here the course lasts 5 years and promotion after the second year is by attainment. This consists of a consolidate mark composed of the teacher's cumulative assessment, the results of the school half-year test and that of the national annual examination. The curriculum of the first two years includes Maltese, English, Arabic, one other foreign language from Italian, French and German, Mathematics, General Science, History, Geography, Civics, Physcial Education, Religion and Craft (for Boys) and Home Economics and Needlework (for Girls), From the third year students study English, Maltese, Arabic (from 1977), one other foreign language, Mathematics, Science, Religion, Maltese, History, Civics and Physical Education as core subjects and then choose one, two or three additional subjects in set streams or 'Options'. These options are: or

(a) the language option in which students add another foreign language;

(b) the Geography-History of Europe option;

(c) the Science option in which students can choose two or three subjects from Physics, Chemistry and Biology;

(d) a Craft option with Craft and Technical Drawing for Boys and Home Economics and Needlework for Girls;

(e) an Art or Music option where students study Art or Music with History of Europe or Geography.

Remedial education is provided in the lower forms while schools are encouraged to develop their own curricula for slow learners and the non-academically minded. At the end of the 5 year secondary school course students may sit for the General Certificate of Education at 'Ordinary' level (Oxford, London or Malta Matriculation) for entry into Upper Secondary and equivalent courses. Upper Secondary Education, which lasts two years and is available for students who have at least 6 GCE 'O' level passes, leads to G.C.E. 'Advanced' level in 3 subjects for entry into University and otherhigher education courses.

There are craft courses in trade schools and technical institutes for students who, from the end of the third year of secondary education, want to learn a trade

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and transfer to a vocational school. Trade Schools provide a variety of 2-4 year courses for boys as well as girls and consist of 75% workshop practice training. Craft courses at technical institutes lead to City and Guilds of London Institute Certificates. Courses are available in basic engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical installation and automobile mechanics trades, welding, radio and TV servicing, woodwork (carpentry, joinery and furniture trades) building construction trades (masonry plumbing and plastering) crafts agriculture, men's tailoring and ladies' trades

Technician courses leading to City & Guilds of London Institute certificates and others available at the Nautical School the Training Centre for Industrial Electronics are available to students who have finished their 5-year secondary education course and obtained a number of GCE 'O' level passes These include mechanical engineering electrical engineering automobile mechanics, telecommunications, shipbuilding, radio officers courses naval engineering cadets, navigation cadets and electronics technician courses. G.C.E. 'O' and 'A' level courses leading to City and Guilds of London Institute craft certificates are also available in Evening Classes. All curricula in government schools are nationally organised and set by the Department of Education. Schools are, however encouraged to devise differentiated curricula and courses to suit particular children.

The two institutes of higher education in the island are the Malta College of Arts Science and Technology and the University. The Malta College of Arts Science and Technology which is under the responsibility of the Education Department has the following departments: Engineering (Mechanical Electrical and Civil), Educational Studies (teacher training) Business Studies, and Hotel Administration and Catering. The M.C.A.S.T. runs full-time, part-time, sandwich and evening courses at different levels ranging from craft and technician level courses (e.g. in Hotel Catering and Administration) to College Diplomas, University of Malta Degrees (B.Sc. (ENG.)) and examinations of professional bodies like the Malta Institute of Accountants

The University of Malta has faculties in Theology, Law Medicine and Surgery, Engineering and Architecture Dental Surgery, Arts and Science. It gives degrees ranging from Bachelor to Doctor and a number of diplomas.

There is a school of Art and a School of Music. The School of Nursing, run by the Medical and Health Department runs regular courses for state registered nurses enrolled nurses and midwives. The Medical and Health Department also runs courses for Physiotherapists, medical laboratory technicians and X-ray technicians. The Ministry of Education also runs an International School of English during the summer vacation for foreign students.

In the private sector there is a small number of commercial schools, while the Malta Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce runs courses in such trades as filigree work, millinery ladies tailoring and musical instrument playing A number of cultural societies supported by foreign embassies hold language courses (Arabic Italian French German Russian). There also exist opportunities for adult courses in such varied aspects as marriage preparation economy and politics, trade-unionism and youth leadership.

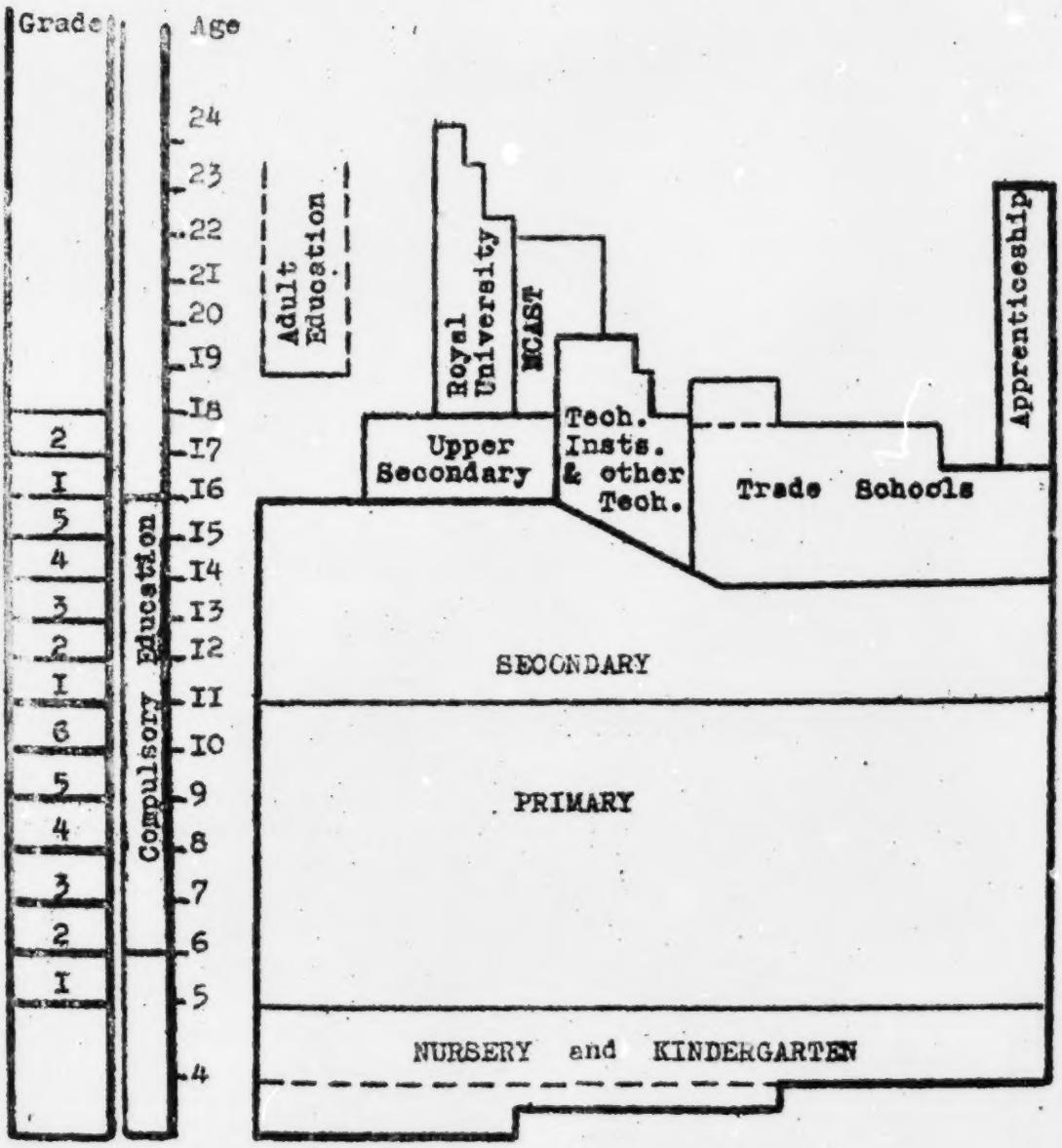
Teacher Education

The normal teacher training course lasts 3 years and is open to students with a minimum number of 7 passes at GCE to include English Language and Maltese and 2 subjects at Advanced Level. Entry is selective. The course includes Educational Theory and Practice (Principles of Education, Educational Psychology Education in its Social Aspects, Methods of Teaching and Teaching Experience), specialisation in a Main subject, basic curriculum studies and extension work. The final examinations are moderated by the University of London Institute of Education. There is also a one-year Post Graduate Teacher's Certificate course which concentrates on Educational Theory and Practice and the methods of teaching the subject of specialisation and which leads to the same certificate as above. The acquisition of a Teacher's Certificate does no longer automatically qualify a recipient for employment on the regular establishment of the Government schools. Recruitment on the permanent establishment of the Education Department is dependent on selection by the Public Service Commission after a suitable call for applications

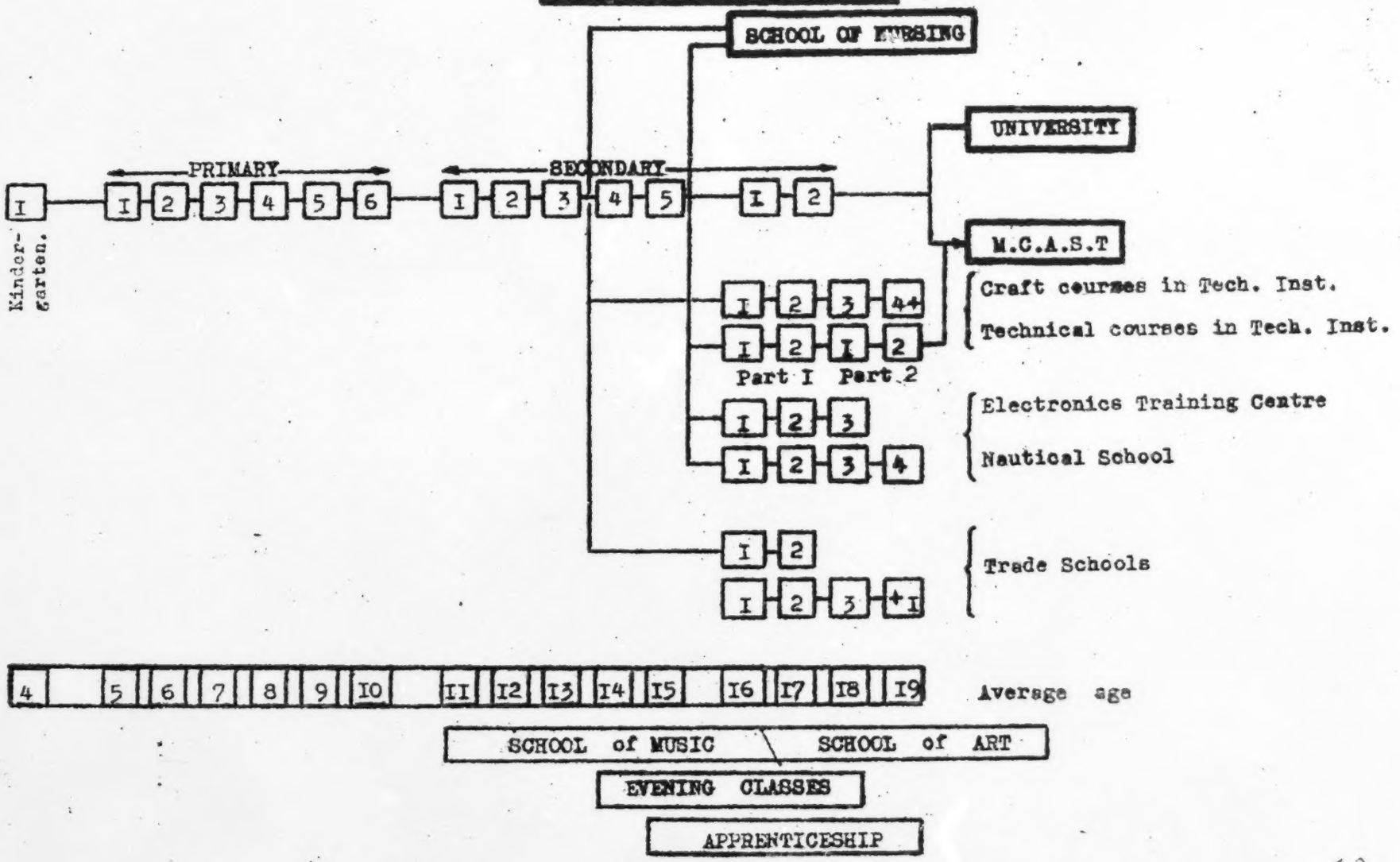
Ad hoc training courses are held for Kindergarten Assistants

The Education Department runs regular in-service and summer vacation courses for teachers according to needs It also encourages the growth of teacher associations/centres for special subjects A number of teachers and other Education Department members are sent annually to further their education overseas through scholarships either to read for higher qualifications or to attend in-service courses.

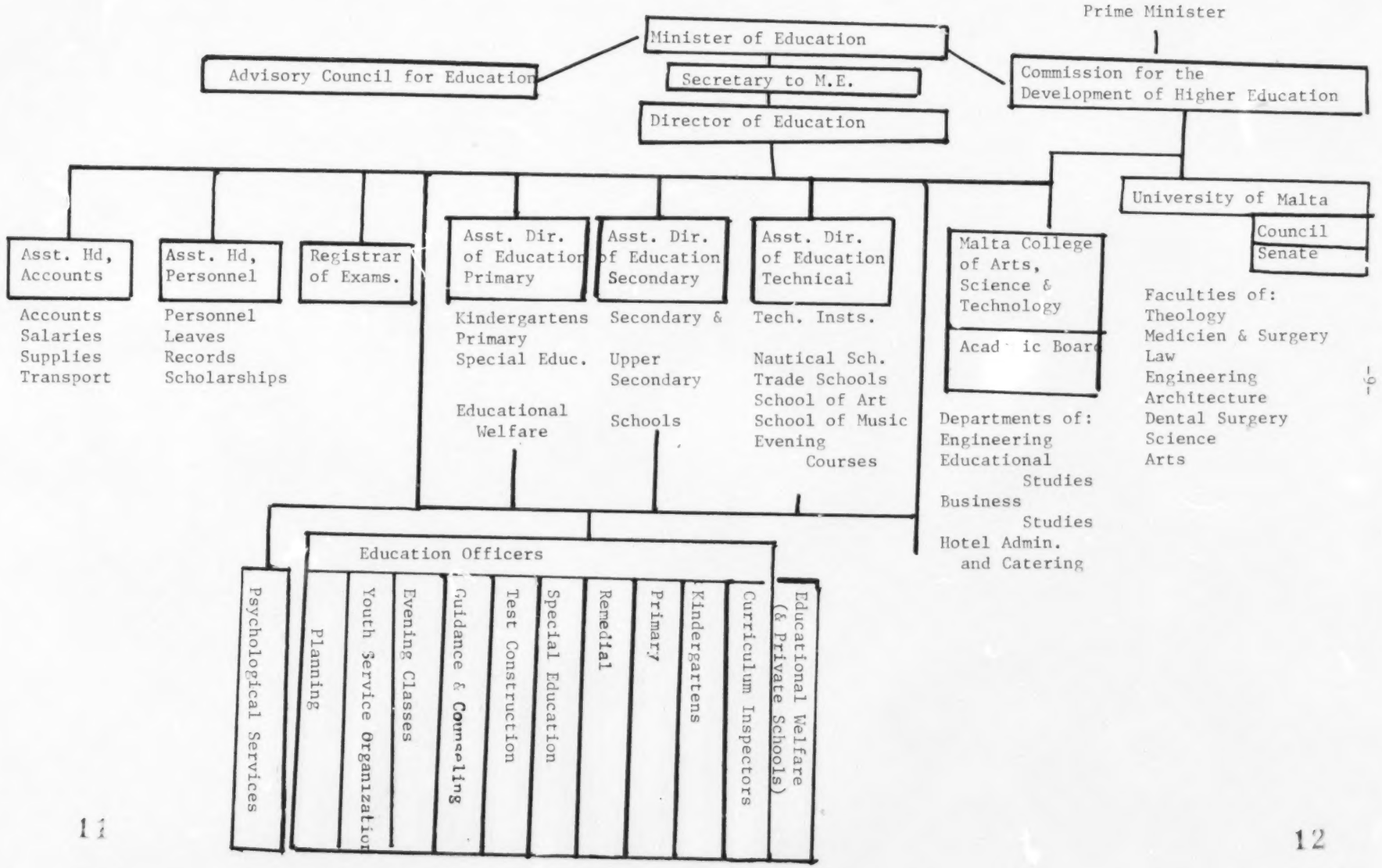
The Maltese Educational System



The Maltese School Ladder



The Administration of Education in Malta



PART II - Educational Development in Malta 1974-76

New Policy Orientations and New Educational Legislative Measures

The main reforms introduced in 1974-75 emanated from the passing of the 1974 Education Act. These included:

(a) the raising of the school leaving age to 16 years;

(b) the reconstitution of the Advisory Council of Education

(c) the setting up of the Commission for the Development of Higher Education

(d) the regularisation of the position of private schools.

In the trade/technical sector, apart from the opening of new schools including the School for Craftsmen the Training Centre for Industrial Electronics, the School of Music and the Nautical School, a training system was started for over 1,200 members of the para-military "Dirgaġn il-Maltin" labour corps on a modular system introduced by I.L.O. experts. This training was given in existing Technical Institutes and Trade Schools. The trades taught to them were quite varied and ranged from mechanical engineering to building construction from filigree work to ladies trades. Another batch of D.I.M. personnel are now in training.

The year 1975-76 saw, among other things the following major developments:-

(a) the introduction of Kindergarten classes for all 4-year olds;

(b) the reorganisation of the teaching and instructor grades accompanied by the creation of new posts and the filling of vacancies;

(c) the introduction of Arabic as a compulsory subject of instruction in government secondary schools;

(d) the introduction of summer clubs for school-children (summer 1975) and the provisions of summer work for students over the age of 18 years (summer 1976).

The launching by the Education Department of a scheme for kindergarten education for all 4-year olds in Malta and Gozo was a successful operation. The Scheme was one of the educational innovations laid down in the 1973-80

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Malta Development Plan. 208 kindergarten groups were set up in 59 centres under 227 kindergarten assistants. By February 1976, there were 1388 boys and 1362 girls in attendance. Registration and attendance in these kindergarten classes are voluntary. Classes open during normal primary schools hours. Intensive in-service training has been provided to the 227 kindergarten assistants recruited to run the scheme. It is the intention of government to continue to support and expand this scheme.

The agreement reached between the Government and the various teacher and instructor trade unions concerned on the reorganisation of the teaching and instructor grades was a major achievement aimed, as in the case of the reorganisation of staffs of other branches of Government employees to diminish the multiplicity of grades and make the service more flexible. The agreement basically did away with the distinctions between Primary School teacher and Secondary School Master, Primary School Head Teacher and Secondary School Headmasters. There are now teachers I, II, III and Head of School I and II for Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Technical institutes. There are now Assistant Heads - Heads of Department and Assistant Heads - Counsellors in the Teacher III Category and Form Masters, Guidance Teachers, School Librarians and Remedial Teachers in Secondary Schools in the Teacher II category. The old inspectorate has been reorganised into Education Officers I and II to include curriculum specialists and special services such as the Youth Service, Test Construction, Guidance and Counselling and Remedial Education. The reorganisation of trade schools personnel entailed the creation of Posts of Instructors I to III and Heads of Trade Schools I and II.

In October 1975, Government introduced Arabic as a compulsory subject in government secondary schools. The study of this subject is considered important given the role the island has to paly as a bridge between Europe and North Africa and the ties that have been established with Arab speaking countries. The study of this language has been made possible by the help of the Libyan Government which provided both teachers and necessary textbooks. In the meantime Arabic or Italian has been made a compulsory subject in the Matriculation for entry into the University of Malta, while courses for Civil Servants in the Arabic language have been opened.

In the Summer of 1975, the Education Department launched a scheme for the provision of leisure activities for school children under the supervision of school-teachers in local schools. The activities included sports and

games, educational excursions, hobby clubs and sea-side camps. Some 7,000 children subscribed. The scheme was a success and repeated with additional activities in the summer of 1976. In the summer of 1976, too, the Government decided to provide summer work for students over the age of 18 years at the national wage of £M15 per week. Around 1,500 students were found employment during the holidays.

Development of the system and of the administration

The school population at the primary level stood at 22,658 in 1975-76. This showed a slight increase over the 1974-75 figures and it is expected that a slow but steady rise will continue. At the secondary level on the contrary, where the population in 1975-76 stood at 22,769 the numbers showed a decrease over the 1974-75 figures and are expected to do so at least for the next five years. The extension of the school leaving age to 16 years has been fully absorbed. This created some discipline and attendance problems but it is expected that with the appointment of additional ancillary educational help in schools (Assistant Heads, Heads of Department, Counsellors, Guidance Teachers, Form Masters etc) the problems will be overcome. Demand for trade school education continues to be high and it has not been possible to satisfy all applicants. The number of trade schools has been increased from 10 to 15. Over 1800 boys and girls were admitted into trade schools in 1975-76. At the same time, 4th year courses in selected trades were added to provide deeper training for the more promising trade school trainees. These students receive a money allowance during their training and have been promised employment on the successful completion of their course. At the upper secondary (VIth Form) level, the curriculum was reformed to enable a student to take any three subjects on the curriculum for his advanced examinations. Students at this level are also expected to study an additional subject as a subsidiary subject and to attend extension courses.

As a result of the reorganisation agreement the schoolyear for the different sectors (primary, secondary and technical but excluding trade schools) has been made of equal length. Schools now open from September 19th to July 14th with mid-term, Christmas, Easter vacations and public holidays. Teachers report for duty on September 15th. The secondary school timetable has likewise been changed from 40 periods of 40 minutes each per week to one of 35 periods of 45 minutes each. Annual examinations on a national level were introduced at the Secondary level. The

object was to motivate students to school studies Promotion to the next higher grade from Form II upwards now depends on obtaining the necessary minimum passes in subjects added by a consolidated mark consisting of (a) teacher's cumulative assessment (b) the school's half-yearly tests and (c) the national examination The annual examinations on a national scale are expected to give indications of pupils' progress and attainment in schools and to serve as a feed-back for curriculum development.

A beginning was made in the setting up of reference libraries in secondary schools. Ten schools were supplied with a basic unit and the system will be extended by 10 schools or so every year. New textbooks have been prepared for the teaching of Maltese at the primary level and Civics at the secondary level while a History of Malta textbook for the secondary schools will be introduced as from 1976-77. Plans are also to update the science curricula at the primary and secondary levels

Educational research and information/documentation services

A preliminary study on the annual examinations held in government secondary schools in June 1975 was prepared by the Test Construction Unit and submitted to the Advisory Council for discussion Research is also being initiated in the levels of attainment and other learning attitudes in the English and Maltese languages by a group of teachers under the University auspices· this programme has developed out of a Conference on Bilingualism held in the Easter of 1976 organised by the University of Malta Department of English in conjunction with the Malta Union of Teachers and the Education Department.

Documentary References

I List of main legislative and regulating documents published 1974-76:
Act XXXIX of 1974: "An Act to consolidate and reform the law relating to Education in Malta", (commonly known as the 1974 Education Act).

II List of main official publications relating to education published 1974-76:
1. Annual Reports on the Working of the Education Department, 1974-75, and 1975-76.

2. Prospectus of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, 1974-75 and 1975-76.

3. The Royal University of Malta Gazette (quarterly) 1974-76.